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Maharajah's father, doing menial out-door work. He was subsequently transferred to the service of the present Maharajah's maternal uncle and accompanied him to Lhassa where he spent three years in his service. At the end of that period his master was killed fighting against the Chinese, and in the same year the then reigning Maharajah died. Tempa returned to Gangtok and resumed service with the reigning Maharajah. Part of his service consisted in carrying letters and offerings to Talung monastery and bringing things back from thence. On his way to and from Talung he used to stop at Lingthem, in the house of Pumri, his present mother-in-law. Pumri and her husband had no surviving sons but only daughters, one of whom Tempa married; as is permissive in such cases Tempa did not take his wife home, but stayed in her house as *komok myok*, or resident son-in-law; thereby he became the heir of his wife's parents.

In character Tempa combines obsequiousness with domineering. Alone among the Lepchas of Lingthem he adopted a special voice, low and wheedling, when speaking to us Europeans; he despised us and thought we could be fooled by flattery, he tried to exploit us and to exploit others through our presence. If we went to the house of a third party when Tempa was present, he would assume all the rights and duties of host, elbowing the real host out of the way; he would offer the host's presents as if he were the giver, would fuss about and scold as if he had been appointed to look after our comfort, and would hand us over stones and ladders as if we were blind and infirm. He used to salaam and put his hands to his head whenever he met us, an action which has no place in Lepcha life; for very important personages Lepchas will unbraid their hair, but bowings and prostrations are uniquely reserved for the images of the lamaist gods. Tempa had a monomania about orphans, or else he thought it was a point to touch European compassion; nearly everybody he referred to, no matter what their age, was tearfully described as having no father and no mother; all other dead relations were also always named. Like Kurma, Tempa was always inclined to show himself as more influential than he was in fact, and insist that people had done certain things or followed certain courses at his advice or through his intervention. These claims were not always true.

When he was appointed Muktair the authority that he gained made him overweening and boastful and he used to threaten everybody who annoyed him, even, it is said, animals and inanimate

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objects. He is one of the very rare people in Lingthem who habitually hits animals. Finally, after he had been Muktair for about six months he assaulted with his stick old Takneum *youmi*, beating him after an argument about a matter of no importance. Immediately after this an agitation was started to get rid of him. The first person to make the discontent vocal was an old man of Tasso, in no way directly connected with either of the parties of the dispute. The Mandals of the five villages consulted together, and then each Mandal held meetings of all the adults where the matter was discussed in the greatest detail; these meetings were held in Lingthem monastery and at the houses of the different Mandals.

While these discussions were taking place, Tempa, though officially the superior of the Mandals, was forbidden by them to be present at any feasts or public gatherings either in the monastery or in private houses. Finally it was decided that so violent and irresponsible a man was unsuitable in a position of authority. A petition signed by all the householders of the district demanded that Tempa be removed from his office; they explained that he was using unjustifiable violence; they said that he was a stranger and did not know their ways; and they requested that the second office of Muktair be abolished and that the Muktair of Gyatong should in future administer their territory also. The Court granted their request, after which Tempa, reduced from all authority to the position of a private householder, was readmitted to the communal feasts and gatherings. No lasting animosity was displayed against Tempa but everybody knows the history and draws the moral; Tempa was angry, but being faced with complete unanimity he could do nothing. Today he is still angry with Takneum *youmi* and the two never visit each other on any occasion; they will, however, eat together in neutral places without quarrelling. This possibility of exclusion is the major Lepcha sanction; the person who is not allowed to feasts and who is not visited, who is in fact 'sent to Coventry' leads a very dull and lonely life; but more than that, if he is not allowed to help other people other people will not help him and it is hard to get through the agricultural and domestic work without help. Similar pressure, it is said, is brought to bear whenever anybody in authority, whether that authority be hereditary or through Court appointment, shows any tendency to abuse his position. It is a most effective control.

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a scene from their own past they describe it minutely and statically, as though they were looking at a picture. They frequently like to make their descriptions clearer by employing twigs or pebbles to represent the people and things described.

It is probable that the value which is placed on story-telling has greatly influenced the Lepcha tendency to monologue, to talk as it were in paragraphs, to which I have already referred; this tendency is noticeable even in the speeches put into the mouths of the characters of their stories. Stichomythia is only applied to jokes.

V

Besides being the greatest social diversion, speech is also the greatest social sanction. For through speech is produced the strongest unpleasant psychological sensation that the Lepchas recognise—shame; and shame is on occasion so unbearable that it leads to suicide.

The training and education of Lepchas from their earliest childhood stresses social approval and disapproval as the motive for adopting or abstaining from certain types of behaviour. A child is told that if he does certain acts—takes other people's property for example, or refuses to work—other people won't like him and won't help him. The emphasis is always on the disapproval of the community in general and not, as with us, on the losing the love of the parents, or the gods, or on the punishment by people in authority. It would seem (though without further evidence this is only a speculation) that this emphasis on anonymous social approval together with the fact that the extended family is a psychologically operative group, and that positive training takes place relatively late in the life of the child, has the result of producing a much weaker internalised control (or super-ego) than is the case when the approving and punishing mechanism is introjected in the image of the parents and parent-surrogates. It is also noteworthy that the Lepcha social organisation only renders possible identification with the community as a whole, and, though to a lesser extent, with the extended family; the Lepchas have not, as most European children and adults have, smaller groups in the community with whom they can identify, and whose approval will support them against the condemnation of another part of the community.

If this is an accurate representation of the case it would follow

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626 that the ego, though normally less disturbed, is also more vulnerable to attacks from without. The mechanisms of self-justification and 154 self-criticism have been brought into play much less. When feelings of guilt are continuously evoked the ego acquires a capacity to deal with them more or less satisfactorily, and is able to balance the support of friendly objects against the actual or believed punishing tendencies of the hostile objects; but when the evocation of guilt feelings depends on exteriorised social disapproval, and when the community which expresses this disapproval is relatively tolerant without over-exacting standards, the occasions when the individual has to deal with such situations are very rare—indeed may never arise after childhood. Consequently the strength of [762] the negative feelings is enhanced by the fact that they are more or less novel; and if the extended family join the community in exteriorising their disapproval the shamed person has no moral support left; in psychoanalytical terminology the whole of the super-ego has turned against the ego and this will produce suicide.

152 The Lepchas describe shame as producing a very unpleasant physical sensation, chiefly located in the belly. When I was trying [673] to discover the Lepcha attitude to sin in the lamaist sense of the word, several people told me that the difference between sin and shame was that, although sin may possibly have some effect on your body or on your after-life, it does not affect you mentally nor do you feel anything in your belly when you commit a sin comparable to that which you would feel if you were reproached for doing your work badly. At one of the big monastery feasts a man from a neighbouring village informed me that turning one of the big prayer-wheels would remove a thousand sins. 'What are sins?' I asked him. 'Killing animals, thinking evil thoughts, doing evil deeds.' 'Do you mind killing animals?' 'No.' I then turned to the people standing around and asked them what sins were? The Mandal, speaking for the community said 'You had better ask a lama; we laymen don't know.' The majority agreed to this; but twelve-year-old Ribu standing by said that sin was killing animals; but it was no sin if the animals were, had been, or might have been eating your crops.

It is extremely easy to shame a person. For example one morning fourteen-year-old Chimpet arrived with an extremely dirty face, after I had made him a present of a cake of soap. I made fun of him in front of his father who joined in; whereupon he turned down his mouth, refused to speak and went and fidgeted with the monastery

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762 actually endangering his life.[6] One of the reasons for believing in the guilt of Hlatam the 'poisoner' was that both she and her son Aga must have been aware of what was said about them and neither had demonstrated their innocence by attempting to kill themselves.

Verbal threats of suicide are occasionally made, but they are taken little notice of. When they are drunk Dunbi, because he is poor, and Katel, because his second wife won't sleep with him, threaten to kill themselves. Children also occasionally threaten to kill themselves if they think they are unjustly scolded or ill-treated; when he was young Pembu, an exceptionally nervous man, used to make such threats, and Chano's younger son, who was brought up by an 'aunt' also does so occasionally; to such threats the parents retort that nobody wants such a naughty child.[7]

626 With this ever-present possibility of provoking shame and even suicide it can be seen that malicious gossip and scandal assume very considerable emotional importance. People are worried as to what their neighbours are saying about them behind their backs; one or two even said that the reason for having '*ingzong*' (special friends) in one's own village was so that if people spoke ill of you you would have somebody whom you can completely trust to tell you what is being said. My impression is that very little scandal is spoken, and that when people did discuss potentially scandalous or disagreeable situations they did so very seriously and with hushed voices, taking care that no children or ignorant neighbours should listen to what they were saying.

626 157 The potential influence of hostile talk has I think further results: it is a very strong sanction to encourage Lepchas to conform to the approved methods of behaviour; and it also makes people chary of expressing judgements about their neighbours. If you ask a Lepcha who in his village has any outstanding quality, whether good or bad, he will almost certainly reply that everybody is much of a muchness. In many ways I think this does represent the real Lepcha attitude; affection is based on mutual services, not on emotion, and consequently difference in character is of much less importance than difference of treatment. Only character traits strongly opposed to Lepcha ideals were spontaneously commented on, and those seldom; cruelty, avarice, untruthfulness,

[6] For an example of this see the story of the attempted suicide of Jiroong's sister in Chapter Sixteen, p. 428.

[7] See also the history of Chélé's threats of suicide; Chapter Six, pp. 164–165.

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quarrelsomeness were on the whole justly ascribed to those people who manifested these qualities; but I could never get people to allot differences in socially valuable qualities, to say for example that A. was a better or worse worker than B. or more or less generous.

I think that I was more conscious in the difference in the characters of the various Lepchas of Lingthem than the Lepchas themselves were; as a member of my culture I naturally judged people emotionally and liked or disliked them for differences of character rather than for their behaviour towards me. Towards the end of my stay I found that I had taken a really firm dislike to some people, particularly to Aga and Katel, whom I considered mean and sly and altogether unpleasant. Aga was fairly generally disliked, but when I told the people I was intimate with that I disliked Katel they obviously could not understand my reasons: he had not treated me badly in any way. When I tried to explain more fully my reasons for disliking him they would explain that he was foolish and did not know how to behave properly. For them this was a sufficient explanation; it wasn't his fault he was a fool and this was no reason for disliking him, provided he fulfilled his obligations. In the same way although lame orphaned Satéo through his clumsiness and incompetence always botched whatever work he was doing, nobody thought of reproving him or preventing him joining in the communal work—he was a liability on any job—because he was patently doing his best and couldn't help his clumsiness. If on the other hand he had been an able-bodied man who through laziness or spite was doing bad work he would undoubtedly be reprimanded and publicly shamed.

Lepchas are very unwilling to speculate on the motives of another's behaviour, whether in the past or present; they always turned aside such questions with the catch phrase 'Who can see into the heart of another?'

vi

Although it is difficult and of questionable value to try to describe the intellectual and temperamental characteristics of the average Lepcha it is perhaps worth while to point out some of their more pronounced group attitudes. The Lepchas possess remarkably vivid and exact verbal and visual memories. They do not prize intellectual quickness and it is on the whole not one of their characteristics. Numbers are practically meaningless to them and

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587 make it drink! In the meantime Gongyop's sister-in-law is living with Zumbu in a purely unofficial position. No attempt, of course, is made to hide their relationship, since in the eyes of the village no sin has been committed. It is likely that the pair will eventually marry; but they cannot do so until such time as Aga's responsibility in the case is settled. His conduct is not approved of, since he already has a wife and children. Had his first wife proved to be sterile there would have been no valid objection to his taking another; nor in such a case would she have made any protest. In no circumstances, however, should he have selected a girl who was already betrothed to another. It would have been perfectly easy, of course, for him to amuse himself with this particular girl in secret; but for an unknown reason that arrangement did not appear to suit either of them, and they insisted upon coming out into the open.

● [626] Neither is ostracised by the rest of the village, since Lepchas are extremely easy-going in all things; but the atmosphere of Aga's home is at the moment somewhat strained, and his wife talks of leaving him at the earliest opportunity. It is probably only love for her children that has kept her there so long.

587 428 Here is another case of inheritance, which shows how a woman may sometimes be inherited before the death of her husband. Such cases are common:

Aplung, Rigiya, and Gyatso were three brothers who lived at home with their parents. Aplung, the eldest, was married first, and while the other two were still quite young. His wife did not care for him overmuch, and he was himself more interested in some other girl. He eventually married her; but before this his original wife was handed over, without any marriage ceremony of course, to Gyatso, the youngest of the three brothers. In the meantime Gyatso ran away to Gangtok, whereupon Rigiya inherited the wife. He was actually already betrothed to another girl, but she did not care for him and had also run off to Gangtok. It would make a better story if I could report that she had eloped with